CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/239 *
25 March 1969

ENGLISH/FRENCH AND SPANISH ONLY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:
LETTER FROM MR. RICHARD M. NIXON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, TO MR. GERARD C. SMITH

"Dear Ambassador Smith,

"In view of the great importance which I attach to the work of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference in Geneva, I wish to address directly to you, as the new Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the Head of our delegation, my instructions regarding the participation of the United States in this conference.

"The fundamental objective of the United States is a world of enduring peace and justice, in which the differences that separate nations can be resolved without resort to war.

"Our immediate objective is to leave behind the period of confrontation and to enter an era of negotiation.

"The task of the delegation of the United States to the Disarmament Conference is to serve these objectives by pursuing negotiations to achieve concrete measures which will enhance the security of our own country and all countries.

"The new administration has now considered the policies which will help us to make progress in this endeavour.

"I have decided that the delegation of the United States should take these positions at the conference.

"First, in order to assure that the seabed, man's latest frontier remains free from the nuclear arms race, the United States delegation should indicate that the United States is interested in working out an international agreement that would prohibit the emplacement or fixing of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction on the seabed. To this end, the United States delegation should seek discussion of the factors necessary for such an international agreement. Such an agreement would, like the Antarctic Treaty and the Treaty on Outer Space which are already in effect, prevent an arms race before it has a chance to start. It would ensure that this potentially useful area of the world remained available for peaceful purposes.

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"Second, the United States supports the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban adequately verified. In view of the fact that differences regarding verification have not permitted achievement of this key arms control measure, efforts must be made towards greater understanding of the verification issue.

"Third, the United States delegation will continue to press for an agreement to cut off the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes and to transfer such materials to peaceful purposes.

"Fourth, while awaiting the United Nations Secretary-General's study on the effects of chemical and biological warfare, the United States delegation should join with other delegations in exploring any proposals or ideas that could contribute to sound and effective arms control relating to these weapons.

"Fifth, regarding more extensive measures of disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, the United States delegation should be guided by the understanding that actual reduction of armaments, and not merely limiting their growth or spread, remains our goal.

"Sixth, regarding the question of talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic arms, the United States hopes that the international political situation will evolve in a way which will permit such talks to begin in the near future.

"In carrying out these instructions, the United States delegation should keep in mind my view that efforts toward peace by all nations must be comprehensive. We cannot have realistic hopes for significant progress in the control of arms if the policies of confrontation prevail throughout the world as the rule of international conduct. On the other hand, we must attempt to exploit every opportunity to build a world of peace -- to find areas of accord -- to bind countries together in cooperative endeavours.

"A major part of the work of peace is done by the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee. I expect that all members of the United States delegation will devote that extra measure of determination, skill and judgment which this high task merits.

"I shall follow closely the progress that is made and give my personal consideration to any problems that arise whenever it would be helpful for me to do so.

"Please convey to all your colleagues my sincere wishes for success in our common endeavor. Over the years their achievements at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference have been outstanding. I am confident that in the future our efforts, in cooperation with theirs, will be equal to any challenge and will result in progress for the benefit of all.

Sincerely,

s/ Richard Nixon"